

# Grant Application Guidelines

## Children and Families

The McKnight Foundation's mission is to improve the quality of life for present and future generations and to seek paths to a more secure and humane world.

Our overarching goal is for all Minnesota's children and families to have the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary for children to thrive and become successful adults. In all of our program areas, we try to work on three levels—respond to community needs, help stakeholders work together more effectively, and change systems and public policy.

The Foundation's grantmaking is mostly in the state of Minnesota. Our direct service funding in Children and Families focuses on the Twin Cities, but our systems change and policy funding may be regional or statewide. Organizations in Greater Minnesota doing work to benefit children and families may seek support through one of the six Minnesota Initiative Foundations, which receive McKnight funding.

### We work to **help children** through support of:

- Intermediary and advocacy organizations that improve the state's **early childhood** system. We occasionally fund national organizations that do related public policy work.
- Organizations that address **gaps in the state's early childhood system** to ensure that child development programs are affordable and accessible to more families. For example, we support research to improve affordability, demonstration projects for children who need specialized services, and programs that educate and involve parents in their children's early development.
- Projects that **improve the quality of childcare**. For example, we support unique professional development opportunities for providers, and programs that improve management and introduce new practice and delivery models.
- High quality **afterschool and summer youth programs**, and mentoring programs. There is one deadline a year for the review of afterschool and summer youth proposals. Separate guidelines for afterschool and summer youth programs are available on our website ([www.mcknight.org](http://www.mcknight.org)).
- Organizations that work with **homeless and runaway youth**.
- Providers of **training for adults who work with youth** and organizations that advance statewide youth policy.
- **District-wide initiatives in the Minneapolis and St. Paul public school districts** to improve educational outcomes for children and youth. We do not accept unsolicited requests for this funding.

### We work to **help families** through support of:

- Projects that **help parents build new skills** to help their children thrive, as well as organizations that build the capacity of these programs. We also support projects that help immigrant and refugee parents advocate on behalf of their children in existing educational, social service, and other systems.

- Projects that **strengthen the role of fathers** and efforts to improve the quality of programs for fathers.
- Projects that **encourage a healthy balance between paid work and parenting, through innovative practices or new policies**—for example, projects that address parents’ lack of time, or introduce family-friendly policies into the workplace. Projects should have potential for state-, sector-, or community-wide effect.
- State analysis and advocacy of public policies that **improve income support for low-income parents** and efforts that improve the way such policies are implemented to help these families.
- Projects that **provide financial counseling to low-income parents** or help them participate in mainstream financial services. We also support training and technical assistance for these counselors, and research and advocacy around the larger, systemic forces that prevent low-income parents from making informed financial choices.

In addition to the areas listed above, we also invest in a small number of organizations that work holistically with families, providing them access to a range of services and support in convenient, neighborhood locations. There is one deadline a year to review these **multiservice organizations**. Separate guidelines soon will be available on our website ([www.mcknight.org](http://www.mcknight.org)).

### **What we do not fund**

Foundations can be most effective by concentrating their resources in a few areas. Inevitably, this means that we cannot support many worthy projects outside our program interests. For instance, we do not make grants for:

- work in the fields of mental health or disabilities, except for services to enhance parents’ capacity to nurture their children
- chemical dependency treatment
- services for seniors
- health services or policy
- scholarships or other types of assistance for individuals
- attendance at or travel to conferences or costs related to conferences
- travel, except when related to other McKnight support of an organization
- scientific research outside established McKnight research programs
- endowments, except in rare cases
- activities that have a specific religious purpose

### **Eligibility and types of support available**

To be eligible for a grant from The McKnight Foundation, the Internal Revenue Service must classify an organization as a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization that is not a private foundation. We do not use fiscal agents.

Units of government may apply for funding for special projects that complement customary public functions. However, we will not fund activities that are traditionally the responsibility of government.

We provide planning, operating, and project grants.

## **How to apply**

*Our website, [www.mcknight.org](http://www.mcknight.org), contains the most detailed and up-to-date information on all six of our program areas.*

Start by submitting a two- to four-page letter that describes your organization, the proposed project or intended use of funds, its relation to McKnight's goals and focuses, and the amount of support requested. Your letter will help us determine whether to request a complete proposal from you. You are welcome to call us at 612-333-4220 to discuss your idea before writing this letter.

Letters of inquiry received by:

November 15 may be considered in February

February 15 may be considered in May

May 15 may be considered in August

August 15 may be considered in November

**The McKnight Foundation**  
**710 South Second Street, Suite 400**  
**Minneapolis, MN 55401**  
**612-333-4220**

The McKnight Foundation was founded in 1953 and endowed by William L. McKnight and Maude L. McKnight. It has assets of approximately \$1.9 billion and granted \$75 million in 2003. Mr. McKnight was one of the early leaders of the 3M Company, although the Foundation is not connected with 3M. McKnight subscribes to the Minnesota Council on Foundation's "Principles for Minnesota Grantmakers."